

NAME OF SPECIALTY SECTION – Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues (ELSI)

**ANNUAL REPORT: 2009-2010**

May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010

**I. Officers/Committees:**

<b>Officers:</b>	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2009-2010</u>
President:	Melinda Pomeroy- Black	Philip Wexler
President-elect:	Philip Wexler	John Norman
Vice President-elect:	John Norman	Sol M. Bobst
Secretary:	Cindy M. Hoorn	Cindy M. Hoorn
Treasurer:	Cindy M. Hoorn	Cindy M. Hoorn
Councilors:	Don W. Korte William Frez	Don W. Korte Robert C. MacPhail
<i>Past-President</i>	Mara Seeley	Melinda Pomeroy-Black
SAC Representative:	Daniel Hochman	Nicole S. Olgun
PDA Representative:	N/A	Daniel J. Hochman

**Committees:** None.

**II. Activities**

**2010 SOT Annual Meeting Reception** was held Salt Lake City, Utah on Wednesday, March 10, 6-7:30 PM.

Approximately 65 people were in attendance.

Phil Wexler called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM on March 10.

Business Meeting Speaker: Matthew La Plante of the Salt Lake Tribute, speaking on *Sickened by Service*

Awards: None

2010 SOT Annual Meeting Courses/Sessions: Science Communication in 2010: A new Decade in Toxicology and Need for Better Communication (endorsed by ELSI)

Endowment Fund Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletters: None

Teleseminars: None

White Papers: None

Contributions to SOT Web site: None

Other Specialty Section 2009-2010 Activities: None

**2010 ELSI Officers' Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, 7 AM – Toaster's Deli – Salt Lake City, Utah**

*Attendees – Steve Gilbert, Dan Hochman, Cindy Hoorn, Bob MacPhail, John Norman, Mara Seely & Phil Wexler*

*By Phone – Sol Bobst*

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Tonight's reception speaker and other SOT 2010 activities

Everyone was looking forward to the evening program and hoping for a good turnout.

**ACTION:** John ('Norm') agreed to write a summary of the ELSI meeting events to share with the membership.

Steve mentioned that this was the first year for a new poster division on Education & Ethics. Unfortunately, there were only four posters presented (2 were Steve's) and this needs to be publicized to increase participation in future years. At least 10 posters need to be presented next year to insure continuation of this topic in future years.

**ACTION:** Steve agreed to write up a summary of the goals and objectives for the poster category and highlight the four posters submitted. This will be used as a marketing piece in the Communique Newsletter; ELSI Newsletter; ToXchange; and Student Rep distribution list.

- III. SOT 2011 sessions (including program, poster, and CE course for SOT 2011, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting, in Washington DC) – seeking 2 volunteers

2011 Themes : Global Air Quality and Human Health, Novel Approaches to Preclinical Safety Assessment, Environment and Disease, Toxicity Testing: State of Science and Strategies to Improve Public Health; Integration of Toxicological and Epidemiological Evidence to Understand Human Risk, Emerging Global Public Health Issues (Deadline for online submission to SOT is April 30, 2010)

There were several good suggestions raised by the meeting participants:

- Sol suggested Rick Becker – weight of evidence approach to risk assessment; include case studies
- Norm suggested incorporating something on the Social Justice issue – CE or a speaker
- Mara suggested resubmitting the CE course on Ethics that she submitted last year; it received positive reviews but didn't make it into this year's program
- Steve suggested a program called '61 – '11 and Beyond – 50 years of issues; this would provide an historical perspective and current status of some of the key ethical and social issues associated with toxicology
- For the more distant future, Bob suggested a symposium providing case studies on historical and emerging issues. This was strongly supported, but all agreed that we would need more time to develop this idea. It should be held for 2012.

**ACTION:** Each of these individuals was invited to develop their idea a bit and write a pre-proposal for consideration and discussion by the group. These are due March 24. Mara suggested contacting the 2011 Program Committee for their suggestions and input on likely topics to ensure the greatest probability of success. She also recommended primarily using SOT members as presenters to keep costs down.

#### IV. Reception speaker for 2011 – Seeking 2 volunteers

The meeting location in DC should provide many good speaker options. Some suggestions:

- Bob suggested Peter Barton Hutt, a DC lawyer who was Chief Legal Counsel for FDA when many of the early regulatory mandates were put into place. He has written a history of food and drug law and could speak on the imperatives and controversies in protecting public health.
- Bob also suggested Susan Cutler, who has developed a metric for evaluating the vulnerability of local communities to various potential risks, including pollution.
- A speaker on the issues related to the association of mercury in vaccines with autism ('Autism's False Prophets' by Paul Offit)
- Mara also suggested Rebecca Skloot, the author of 'Immortal Roots' a new book on Henrietta Lacks, the woman behind the first human cell line (HeLa) and her unwitting scientific legacy.
- Suggestion was also made to consider a speaker to expand 'On being a scientist...' (National Academy Press)

**ACTION:** Please send additional suggestions to Phil & Bob, who have volunteered to investigate these suggestions and come up with a recommendation for next year's reception speaker. They will also try to do some contingency planning to provide a back-up in case the primary is not available, to prevent the scramble of this year.

#### V. Awards – Student? SOT Global Initiatives? Other?

ELSI currently offers Student Awards 'to encourage consideration of the ethical, legal, and social implications of toxicologically based research.' Winners receive recognition plaques, as well as monetary prizes to be awarded for both Pre and Post-Doctoral student categories, including a 1st prize of \$500 plus a Taylor and Francis gift certificate and a 2nd prize of \$300 plus a Taylor and Francis gift certificate. There were no nominations for this award in 2010.

The group agreed that we need to do a better job of publicizing these awards and may want to consider other options for awards as well.

**ACTION:** Cindy will update the website to ensure the current information is available (this includes new officers as well). She will also work with the other officers to ensure that this information is distributed to the ELSI membership in advance of the Feb 1, 2011 deadline.

Cindy will also take a look at the current budget and income stream and determine if there is money to consider another type of award and if so, consolidate recommendations on what this could

look like. There are apparently matching funds available from SOT for ‘global initiatives’ that we could pursue (e.g., Phil suggested something like a grant to provide funds to help to establish a poison control center in Nigeria.) She will also look into other possible revenue streams/fundraising to support this.

#### VI. Intersessional Activities?

All were agreed that we need to meet more frequently to maintain the energy and momentum generated by the annual meeting at SOT. It was agreed that a series of teleconferences may be the best way to manage this.

**ACTION:** Phil will work with the team electronically to schedule a teleconference in May or June to discuss follow-up on the action items from this meeting. The meeting will need to be scheduled to allow participation from both coasts.

#### VII. Newsletter (There was none in 2009) – Seeking 2 volunteers. What schedule? What content? What size? What distribution mechanism?

Similarly, we need to do a better job of communicating with the ELSI membership and with the SOT membership in general on the interests and pursuits of ELSI. Submission deadlines for the Communique are April 5, August 3, October 5 and December 7. We should make an effort to have something in each issue, and it would also be a good idea to try to revitalize the ELSI Newsletter.

**ACTION:** Cindy and John will collaborate to solicit content from the officers and membership prior to each of these deadlines. John has agreed to provide a summary of the ELSI events and activities at this meeting as a first communication.

#### VIII. Review of ELSI Web site – Ideas for modification/update/enhancement – Seeking 2 volunteers

The website is currently very sparse and lacks both pizzazz and up-to-date information, including links to other organizations with similar missions. Dan strongly encouraged us to get on board with a ToXchange page as a means to convey more up-to-the-minute information, vs. the more static info provided on the website.

**ACTION:** All board members should take a look at the website and send suggestions for improvement to Mara, who will also consult with Steve for ideas.

Dan agreed to set up a ToXchange page for the group and get us rolling in that area.

#### IX. Expansion of ELSI scope – e.g. history? Information/informatics?

Phil suggested expanding the scope of the organization somewhat to take in some of the ‘orphan topics’ that don’t fall under the other Specialty Sections (e.g., history; informatics; alternative careers; environmental justice). While there was general support for this, there was some concern that the group not become too unfocused or ‘maverick’. Apparently, there a perception that we are

becoming rather 'fringe' and we could endanger our status as a Specialty Section if we don't stay within the comfort zone of SOT leadership.

Dan proposed a revision of the current ELSI rationale and objectives in an effort to clarify our purpose and mission. Once this is completed, he also proposed revising the poster to better reflect our mission and activities.

**ACTION:** Everyone should review the current information on the website related to ELSI's rationale and objectives and give some thought to expansion of the scope. This will be discussed at the upcoming teleconference. (<http://www.toxicology.org/ISOT/SS/ELSI/index.asp>)

Dan agreed to contact the ELSI membership via email to ask for input on this initiative. Why did they get involved in the group? What do they see as our primary mission? What would they like to see fall under the umbrella of the organization?

When we move forward on this, Dan has also agreed to update the poster!